

in the highest sense responsible to the national interest and at the same moment sensitive to moral possibilities. Indeed, it was Kennedy's supreme achievement that he was able to relate morality and foreign policy without falling into the moralistic illusions of idealism or the inflexibilities—equally illusory—of a too simple realism.

Let us hope that President Johnson and Premier Kosygin and party leader Brezhnev will find new means to widen the consensus developed by their predecessors.

CORRESPONDENCE

"Dr. Brown Is Unduly Alarmed"

TO THE EDITORS: I agree with Robert McAfee Brown ("Shadow Over the Council," Dec. 14 issue): collegiality is a bitter pill for Pope Paul to swallow. . . . However, I think Dr. Brown is unduly alarmed over the delay in the passage of religious liberty.

"The statement" Dr. Brown speaks of is not quite the correct terminology. There is no single statement in question. There were at least five successive versions worked over by various committees under the direction of Cardinal Bea. "The statement" presented late in the third session was a substantially new document. Any vote on it, in the circumstances, would have been too precipitate, considering its great importance and relatively revolutionary character.

I'll put up my journalist's tessera against Dr. Brown's observer's credentials that religious liberty passes through the fourth session.

ROBERT B. KAISER
Beverly Hills, Calif.

(Mr. Kaiser covered the first two sessions of Vatican II for *Time* magazine.)

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January 25, 1965

*"To hide from the flesh . . .
is to miss the Christian life"*

THE CELEBRATION OF FLESH

Poetry in Christian Life

ARTHUR C. MCGILL

Religion Department, Princeton University

"I focus my attention upon three recent American poets," writes Dr. McGill in *THE CELEBRATION OF FLESH*, "T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens. They belong to the same poetic generation, and therefore provide a microcosm of poetry which has been available to this country in the recent past.

"That I should identify poetry with the fleshly aspect of experience may seem curious, not only in view of the notoriously intellectual character of recent verse, but especially because of the spiritual emphasis of Christianity. Yet this spirituality represents a constant danger in the Christian life, if it is pursued without regard for the reality of flesh. In the kingdom of God men are created with flesh, reconciled through flesh, and glorified as flesh. To hide from the flesh for the sake of the spirit is to miss the Christian life. It is this danger which gives special meaning to the enjoyment of poetry.

"Whatever enthusiasm a theologian may have for poetry and poems, his thoughts and judgments must be nourished by the labor of regular critics. The influence upon me of Owen Barfield, John Crowe Ransom and Cleanth Brooks will be obvious to any reader who knows their works."

"Poetry, as such," Dr. McGill says elsewhere, "is always a healthful antidote to spiritual pride." This is the major thesis of this book. *Cloth*, \$5.00; *paper*, \$3.50.

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